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Houston, Texas

Venita Harris Obituary

Harris Venita Walker VanCaspel Harris, passed away peacefully at The Buckingham care facility in Houston on Friday, the 23rd of September 2011, after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. She was born in Sweetwater in western Oklahoma to Leonard Rankin Walker and Ella Belle (Jarnagin) Walker in a decade long ago. She spent most of her childhood years in the town of Sayre, Oklahoma not far from Sweetwater and graduated from Sayre High School at the top of her class.

Venita grew up with very little money and therefore developed a healthy respect for money and how it is acquired. This keen interest in money led her to major in Economics and Finance in college, first at Duke University and then at the University of Colorado where she was the only female in most of her classes. Venita was the first member of her family to attend college and she had to pay her own tuition and expenses with a number of jobs ranging from cafeteria cashier to laundry clerk in her dormitory.

Venita excelled in college, was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society and decided that her calling was to learn as much as possible about money and how to accumulate it and then pass this knowledge on to others so they might become financially independent. After receiving her BA degree in Economics and Finance at the University of Colorado, she did post-graduate work at the New York Institute of Finance. And in 2009, Venita was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Northwood University. Her career in finance began as a clerk in a Houston stock brokerage firm and when she asked to take the broker's exam and passed, the managers were at a loss as to what to do with her. She suggested that she conduct money management seminars and speak to the women's clubs and professional groups in Houston. She quickly was in great demand as a speaker and soon decided to start her own stock brokerage firm, something that was unheard of in the early 1970's for a woman.

Venita excelled as Founder and CEO of VanCaspel and Company, Inc. and she became a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and Registered Investment Advisor. She was invited to become the first woman member of the Pacific Stock Exchange and in 1975 she wrote her first book, Money Dynamics, which became an instant national hit. She went on to write five additional books in the

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other women in the field of finance.

Venita was a contributor to numerous national and regional magazines and in the early 1980's, she launched her very popular weekly 30-minute television program, "The Money Makers," which was shown on PBS throughout the United States and Canada for seven years. This award-winning program was followed by her "Profiles of Success" on PBS which was broadcast nationally and in Canada for two years.

In 1982, Venita was chosen "Financial Planner of the Year" by the Institute of Certified Financial Planners and was later ranked as "Number One Financial Planner" in the US by 2,400 professionals in the industry in the "Digest for Financial Planning."

In 1982, Venita became a recipient of the coveted Horatio Alger Award for Distinguished Americans, was presented the George Norlin Distinguished Alumni Award by the University of Colorado in 1987, and was given the Distinguished Woman's Award in 1986, by Northwood University.

In April of 1984, Venita experienced a chance meeting with Houston real estate management executive Lyttleton T. Harris IV and they began dating and were married in 1987, in Baton Rouge where Lyt grew up. Lyt and Venita were inseparable soul mates and were frequently seen out and about on the Houston social circuit and at numerous charity events. They shared a common interest in international travel and cruising and took numerous trips abroad in addition to some forty-three ocean and river cruises.

Venita was a member of Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, the Houston Racquet Club, a sustaining member of The Junior League of Houston and active in numerous charitable and philanthropic causes in Houston and nationally. She served on several corporate and non-profit boards, including Capital Bank, M Bank, The Horatio Alger Association and was a long-time member of the Board of Trustees of Northwood University.

Venita is survived by her loving and devoted husband Lyt; sister, Philippia Blackburn of Royal Palm Beach, Florida; brother, Dayle Walker and wife Hazel of Enid, Oklahoma; and sister-in-law, Nancy Harris Hix and husband Dr. Robert Hix of Williamsburg, Virginia. She is also survived by niece, Gina Walker; and nephews, Ronald Walker, Carroll Walker, Russell Walker and their families of Oklahoma, and nephews Charles Blackburn and Gary Blackburn and their families of Florida.

The family would like to especially thank Venita's long-time caregiver, Yvonne Miller, for her steadfast devotion and dedication to taking care of Venita over the past two years. They would also like to thank the dedicated professionals at the Buckingham for their excellent care of Venita for the past five months while she was in residence there.

Friends are cordially invited to a visitation with the family from four o'clock in the afternoon until seven o'clock in the evening on



Immediately following, all are invited to greet the family during a reception in the Narthex.

At a later date, the family will gather for a private interment at Roselawn Memorial Park in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

In lieu of customary remembrances, the family requests that memorial donations be made to Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, 11612 Memorial Dr., Houston, TX, 77024; the Venita and Lyttleton T. Harris Endowed Scholarship Fund at Northwood University, 4000 Whiting Drive, Midland, MI, 48640; the [Alzheimer's Association](#), Houston and Southeast Texas Chapter, 2242 West Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX, 77030-2008; or to the charity of one's choosing.



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Published by Houston Chronicle from Sep. 25 to Sep. 29, 2011.

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